

[2969] BRAZILIAN SPOTTED FEVER TRANSMITED BY *AMBLYOMMA AUREOLATUM* (ACARD) IN MOGI DAS CRUZES, BRAZIL: REPORT OF FOUR HUMAN CASES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL MEASURES

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Brazilian spotted fever (BSF) is a tick-borne rickettsiosis transmitted in rural areas and in the surroundings of vegetation preserved areas, in SE Brazil. Humans are accidentally infected when bitten by *Amblyomma* spp., either carried by domestic and wild animals, or being acquired when humans invade savannas and forests for recreation or work. The main hosts of the tick in nature are wild animals. **Human cases.** Four cases of BSF were notified from June to December 1998, in the Taícupeba District, Mogi das Cruzes, SP. Three women, aged 16, 18 and 40 died, only a 6 years old boy survived. Two previous deaths (a man and a boy, respectively 70 and 11 years old) are also suspected to be undiagnosed cases of BSF. All patients belonged to 2 poor blood-related families. **Environment.** Tourist place in the margin of the city water reservoir, surrounded by dense Atlantic forest. Capibaras are very common in the area. In the site about 1 km² where the cases occurred there are few recreational rural properties. There are also degraded areas with sparse eucalyptus trees, many trunks and root remains, wastelands with scattered sewage, and 2 decrepit wood hut in the water reservoir margin. Sparse termite mounds with large cavities beneath complete the picture. The 2 victim families live in 2 poor brick houses about 100m from each other. They had 12 dogs and 3 cats as pets. They referred that rats are common, also inside their houses. **Control.** Control measures just followed the first clinical evidences of BSF: education program, site sanitation, a detailed rat control program, and pets treatment. Pets had their ticks mechanically removed and were elected for subsequent chemical control. However, the unexpected death of a woman aged 40, only 1 week after our search for ticks on their fierce dogs, obliged an emergency unpleasant measure to abort transmission: all pets were immediately killed in the field. **Conclusions.** The transmitter tick is *A. aureolatum*, instead of *A. cajennense*, common in other endemic BSF areas in SE Brazil. Capibaras are elected as the main natural hosts of the ticks and pathogens. Adult ticks are common in dogs, that run capibara trails. Immatures of *A. aureolatum* are also carried by domestic and wild small rodents, thus preventive and control measures should include a thorough long-term rodent control program in houses and their neighborhood, in addition to traditional measures. Finally, despite controversial and maybe subjected to disapprove of animal protection agencies, pets are highly undesirable in BSF endemic areas. **Acknowledgment:** Dr. T. Schumaker kindly identified the ticks.

Index terms: rickettsiosis